

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

INFO USDA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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MADRID PASS SECRETARY BUTZ

BELGRADE FOR STANLEY BROWN, FAS

ATHENS FOR AG ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAGR, PFOR, OVIP (BUTZ, EARL L), BU

SUBJECT: SECRETARY BUTZ'S VISIT TO BULGARIA: CONVERSATIONS WITH
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE KRUSTEV

REF: SOFIA 900; SOFIA 0906

1. MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY BUTZ AND MINAG KRUSTEV

AT MINISTRY APRIL 26 FOLLOWED SECRETARY'S MEETING

WITH PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV. FOLLOWING SUMMARY MEMCON

HAS NOT YET BEEN CLEARED WITH SECRETARY BUTZ.

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2. AFTER BOTH PRINCIPALS HAD COMMENTED ON ZHIVKOV'S GRASP OF AGRICULTURAL MATTERS, KRUSTEV GAVE RUNDOWN ON BULGARIAN AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS, CITING STANDARD INDICATORS FREQUENTLY USED BY GOB. HE STATED 29 PERCENT OF "NATIONAL INCOME", 33 PERCENT OF EXPORTS, AND 45 PERCENT OF ARTICLES PRODUCED DOMESTICALLY ORIGINATED IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. HE ALSO REITERATED THAT EXPANSION OF LIVESTOCK BREEDING IS "MAJOR OBJECTIVE" OF GOB AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND CONCEDED IT WAS LINKED WITH SOLVING FODDER PROBLEMS.

KRUSTEV FURTHER DEVOTED TIME TO EXPLANATION OF BULGARIAN AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION UNDER NATIONAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.

3. SECRETARY RESPONDED BY EXPRESSING INTEREST IN BULGARIAN AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE, STATING HE WAS CONVINCED AFTER DISCUSSION WITH ZHIVKOV THAT BILATERAL COOPERATION COULD BE FRUITFUL, AND THAT US LOOKED FORWARD TO DISCUSSIONS ON EXCHANGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION. HE REFERRED TO AND RE-EXTENDED INVITATION TO TEAM OF BULGARIAN SPECIALISTS TO VISIT US FOR DISCUSSIONS ON INITIAL AREAS OF COOPERATION, SAYING THAT IF SUCCESS CAN BE SHOWN IN SPECIFIC AREAS IN EARLY YEARS, THEN PROGRAM CAN BE EXPANDED LATER. HE WARNED AGAINST AGREEMENT WITHOUT SPECIALIZATION AS WELL AS ONE SO FORMAL "DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD HAVE TO SIGN". BULGARIAN SIDE REPLIED THAT EXPERTS COULD BE EXPECTED IN MAY OR JUNE, AND SECRETARY SAID THIS WAS AGREEABLE. WHEN BULGARIAN EXPERTS WERE NAMED, DEPT OF AG WOULD SET UP SUITABLE TEAM. SECRETARY ALSO EXTENDED INVITATION TO MINISTER AND MRS. KRUSTEVA TO VISIT US, FOR WHICH KRUSTEV EXPRESSED APPRECIATION, SECRETARY CONCLUDED WITH REMARKS ON IMPORTANCE AND POWER OF AGRICULTURE AND NECESSITY OF EXPANSION TO MEET WORLD NEEDS.

4. OTHER EXCHANGES OF INTEREST WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING MEETING WERE AS FOLLOWS:
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-- US SIDE TOOK NOTE OF BULGARIAN RECORD IN INCREASING MEAT CONSUMPTION, CURRENT CONSUMPTION STANDS AT 57 KG PER CAPITA AND PLAN CALLS FOR IT TO REACH 70 KG BY 1980, HOWEVER, BULGARIANS SAID IT WOULD PROBABLY REACH 75 BY THAT DATE.

-- CREDITS FOR AGRICULTURE ARE GIVEN THROUGH THE

NATIONAL BANK AT AN INTEREST RATE OF 3 OR 4 PERCENT

-- PRIVATE PLOTS COMPRISE .6 MILLION HECTARES
OF 4.6 MILLION HECTARES ARABLE LAND IN BULGARIA.
25 PERCENT OF MEAT AND EGGS AND "LESS THAN 10 PERCENT"
OF MILK COME FROM PRIVATE SECTOR WHICH IS ASSISTED
WITH FODDER AND MACHINERY FROM STATE.

-- ONE MILLION PENSIONERS LIVE IN RURAL AREAS
AND THEY ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE PRODUCTION ON
PRIVATE PLOTS.

5. IN OTHER EVENTS DURING VISIT, SECRETARY BUTZ
VISITED "AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" AT PERVENETS
OUTSIDE PLOVDIV, WHERE EXPERIMENTS IN INTENSIVE
ORCHARD (APPLES AND PEARS) AND VINEYARD CULTIVATION
ARE CARRIED OUT. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION WITH CHARGE,
SECRETARY BUTZ DURING LUNCHEON APRIL 27 PROPOSED
TO MINISTER KRUSTEV THAT AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE IN
ATHENS BE ACCREDITED TO SOFIA AS WELL. KRUSTEV
AGREED IN PRINCIPLE, AS DID DEPUTY FONMIN MINCHEV
WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT. (COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES
ACCREDITATION AND VISITS OF AGATT FROM ATHENS WILL
DEFINITELY ASSIST OUR COVERAGE OF BULGARIAN ECONOMY
AND POSSIBLY COULD LEAD TO INCREASED SALES. EMBASSY THUS
HEARTILY CONCURS IN PROPOSAL.)

6. IT WAS QUITE CLEAR THROUGHOUT VISIT THAT BULGARIANS
WERE PUTTING THEIR BEST FOOT FORWARD IN ATTEMPT TO
CONVINCE SECRETARY THAT BULGARIA WOULD BE A WORTH-
WHILE PARTNER FOR US IN AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION AS
IN OTHER AREAS. FULLER ASSESSMENT OF SECRETARY'S
VISIT BY SEPTTEL.
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FELDMAN

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